

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH October 10, 2006

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School Committee held a meeting on this date at

7:00 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Bill Clay, William Munroe, and Frank Maher. Member McFadden left the meeting early at 9:40 p.m. Director of Administration Robert V. Ross; Director of Curriculum Nancy I. Daley; and Student Member Geoffrey Southworth were present. Director of Special Services Maureen DeCrescenzo arrived at 7:04 p.m. Interim Superintendent DiPrete was absent.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order in Open Session at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Member Maher read the District Mission statement.

OPEN FORUM – Exeter Charter Review Committee member Mike Picillo explained he was in the process of reviewing the School Committee's bylaws as part of a ten year review process. He reported his findings that the Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District

School Committee's policies and charter are in conflict with one another. He went on to say that many policies have amended the charter. In order to amend the charter, the School Committee is required to go to both town councils and request it be placed on the ballot. He gave a brief overview of some sections that are in compliance and some that are not. He said that many of the sections regarding the "chair's authority" are rewriting RI General Law. Mr. Picillo explained he is reporting this information to the School Committee in order to circumvent legal proceedings and legal fees against the committee. Mr. Picillo agreed to provide the School Committee with specific incidences in writing so it may correct the necessary policies.

Director of Special Services Maureen DeCrescenzo arrived at this time (7:10 p.m.).

PRESENTATION – Student Member Report – Student Member Geoffrey Southworth reported the next two weeks will be very busy at the senior high school. He said that all high school students will be taking part in testing and that some students will be shadowed by New England Association of Schools and Colleges guests who will be visiting the high school next week. Geoffrey also reported that Homecoming was a great success, all sports teams were victorious that day, and he expressed his thanks to student council members for their involvement.

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA – Director of Special Education Maureen DeCrescenzo gave an overview of the Consent Agenda.

Members McFadden and Munroe requested agenda item, A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Minutes of September 26, 2006 be pulled from the consent agenda.

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Member Clay moved to accept the consent agenda with item, A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Minutes of September 26, 2006 pulled. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 7 – 0.

The following items were approved:

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments

- a. Jean Murano as 0.5 FTE Proficiency Based Graduation Requirement (PBGR) Coordinator at the Senior High School, Salary \$36,313 effective October 11, 2006**

2. Leaves of Absence

3. Resignations

4. Grievances

C. Bills – In the amount of \$159,264.78

D. Home School Approvals – (As Recommended by the Interim Superintendent)

1. ZINNO – Albert and Anthony

2. CASCIANO – Jadon

End Consent Agenda

Chair DeSack reviewed the correspondence.

E. Correspondence – (1) Teacher Resources-Rhode Island PreK-12 Literacy Policy-December 2005, (2) Rhode Island PreK-12 Literacy Policy December 2005, (3) Superintendent Interview Schedule, (4) July 20, 2006 Memo from Superintendent Seitsinger Regarding Interview Team Members

Member McFadden said he had requested administration provide a student enrollment breakdown by town at tonight's meeting. Director of Administration Robert Ross explained a final count will be completed on October 14, 2006. Mr. Ross gave the following verbal preliminary count:

West Greenwich Students – 1,057

Exeter Students – 974

Total Students – 2,031

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Chair DeSack requested this item be added to the next regular School Committee agenda and that an accurate count be provided at that time.

Monthly Status Reports – Interim Superintendent – Member Clay referenced the Jr. – Sr. High Grounds / Athletic Fields Improvement and Maintenance Plan attached to the Interim Superintendent's Status Report and recommended it be discussed at a School Committee meeting. Chair DeSack reminded members of tonight's agenda item, Appearance of Jr. – Sr. High School Grounds and said this report will be discussed at that time.

Business – Members did not express any questions or concerns regarding this item.

Curriculum – Members did not express any questions or concerns regarding this item.

Special Education – Members did not express any questions or concerns regarding this item.

Maintenance – Members did not express any questions or concerns regarding this item.

NEW BUSINESS – 8th Grade Quebec Trip Proposal – Jr. High school teacher Benjamin Blackett explained, with the exception of a price difference, the trip proposal before members is identical to last year's trip proposal. Member Clay conveyed he has read the proposal and it meets School Committee policy regulations. Vice Chair Cicero voiced her opinion that this trip is a great experience for students, as her child was a participant last year.

Member Clay moved to approve the 8th Grade Quebec Trip Proposal. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 6 – 0 – 1. Member McFadden abstained.

Report on Possible Purchase of Mini Buses for Future Transportation Needs – After an extensive discussion and exchange of opinions and ideas, Chair DeSack asked if there was a consensus to have Director of Administration Robert Ross research whether it would be cost-effective for the district to purchase one or two mini buses. All members were not in agreement. Consensus of the committee was to instead discuss at the next regular School Committee meeting other alternate ways to modify transportation.

Appearance of Jr. – Sr. High School Grounds – Parent Mike Sullivan addressed the committee and gave a brief overview of an incident

that occurred at a September sporting event held at the Jr. – Sr. High School football field area. Mr. Sullivan reported his son had been stung several times because there was a bees' nest near the concession stand. He expressed his concerns and disappointment regarding the conditions of the track/football grounds area. He questioned why the grounds got to that point and asked how to prevent the grounds from getting to that point again.

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Chair DeSack explained that Interim Superintendent DiPrete met with the Director of Maintenance Bill Plumley and Principal Boulé and set standards concerning this matter. She offered to let Mr. Sullivan read the standards report, if School Committee members agree. Chair DeSack told Mr. Sullivan she could not answer as to why the grounds got to that point, but will make certain to get an answer to him.

Members, Principal Boulé, and Mr. Sullivan exchanged ideas and discussed plans in place to remedy this situation and to continually maintain the school grounds. There was a general consensus to get students involved through community service obligations, senior project requirements, and FFA, sports teams', and student council participation. Principal Boulé reported Interim Superintendent DiPrete and Director of Maintenance Bill Plumley have established a maintenance schedule and Interim Superintendent DiPrete has made the senior high maintenance department commit to the schedule

regardless of circumstances that may arise. Principal Boulé said that Administration will review the plan again to see whether the situation improves and that they are trying to be proactive. Consensus of the committee was to have Mr. Plumley attend the next regular School Committee meeting to address the situation, to report on the plans for a solution, and to clarify if his department is in need of any equipment. Member Maher thanked Mr. Sullivan for coming forward with his concerns. Mr. Sullivan offered to volunteer to coordinate sports teams' and students' involvement and to help with the upkeep of the grounds but would need to know whether there are rules in place to do so. Chair DeSack suggested Principal Boulé could help Mr. Sullivan with any questions he may have.

Convening a Sub Committee on Health Care – Director of Administration Robert Ross reported that due to a great increase in the district's health care experience during the 2005 – 2006 school year and the district's preset rates which were set based on health care experience between February 2006 and August 2006, the district is in a deficit situation with its WB Community Health Insurance account. Due to the adverse impact this will cause to the 2007-2008 premium rate, Mr. Ross recommended making an additional monthly payment of \$227,000 (through the general fund balance) as soon as possible. Mr. Ross gave an overview of how the WB Community Health program works and explained unless the committee takes action now the district can anticipate a 45-60 % rate increase. Members and Mr. Ross also discussed the need to convene a

sub-committee on health care and what its anticipated role will be. Consensus of the committee was to continue this item onto the next regular School Committee meeting agenda and to have Mr. Ross submit a formal request and an unaudited fund balance account at that time.

Also, there was a consensus to hold a general open meeting on Tuesday, November 21, 2006, to invite a representative from WB Community Health to come to that meeting and bring with them a financial breakdown and their thoughts regarding this issue. It was further stated that representatives from council 94 and the teachers' union be invited to attend as well.

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Parents Seeking Alternative Transportation for Student – Director of Administration Robert Ross referenced a supplemental packet memo enclosure concerning this matter and explained the outlined solution that the district has resolved transportation issues in the past. He confirmed the parents of this West Greenwich student are satisfied with this proposed solution. Director of Special Services Maureen DeCrescenzo gave a summary of other solutions the administration sought to remedy this situation and explained that although the family initially did not want to transport their child to school; they agreed to do so when they realized the district's efforts. Mr. Ross voiced his opinion that next year there will be robust discussion

regarding transportation since the district consists of 109 square miles with 120 students placed out of district. He said it is going to get expensive and the addition of one more bus will cause the district to go over its transportation budget.

Vice Chair Cicero moved to appropriate \$9,050 for alternative transportation for the student. Seconded by Member Clay. Voted 7 – 0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – SAT Results Clarification – Director of Curriculum Nancy Daley referenced a “corrected” SAT Scores 2006 memo/summary and briefly explained corrections that were made to the report. After a lengthy discussion regarding EWG students’ and some south county students’ SAT scores, the SAT prep course offered at the high school last year, and the different probable factors attributing to the SAT scores outcome, Member McFadden proposed the committee consider running parallel SAT prep courses: (1) continuing with the existing in-district format, and (2) hiring a private firm that specializes in SAT improvements, and then comparing the outcome of test scores. Member McFadden also proposed reviewing block scheduling to make certain it was a proper decision.

Consensus of the committee was to add to the next regular School Committee meeting agenda SAT prep course/private firm - cost per student and what is offered. And to add to the second regular meeting agenda in November – Block Scheduling Review and to have

Principal Boulé review block scheduling and report what alternatives other high schools have put into practice, other than block, in response to those situations. Ms. Daley will also provide at the next regular meeting an update on the ACT results.

Superintendent Search – Chair DeSack explained the first round of interviews will include parents and administrators as part of the interviewing team. Vice Chair Cicero contacted those individuals today and they will be provided with résumé packets. If members need to leave early or arrive late to an interviewing session, it is advisable to refrain from interrupting an ongoing interview. Vice Chair Cicero reminded members only School Committee members will be voting during the second round of interviews.

Chair DeSack asked members to please submit interview questions to her by the end of the week.

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Metcalf Fire Alarm - Update – Director of Administration Robert Ross reported he talked with a representative of L.A. Torrado (architectural/engineering services) earlier today. They indicated the architectural drawings should be approved by the fire marshal by next week. The bid-spec and advertisement is scheduled to take place the following week. And all phases for this project are on schedule.

Policies – Review and Adoption - #6250 – Sexual Harassment – Employees – 2nd Reading – Members did not express any questions or concerns concerning this policy. This policy will be carried over to the next agenda for adoption.

#8514 – Sexual Harassment – Students – 2nd Reading – Members did not express any questions or concerns concerning this policy. This policy will be carried over to the next agenda for adoption.

#6251 – Prohibited Fraternization Between Employees and Students – 2nd Reading – Members did not express any questions or concerns concerning this policy. This policy will be carried over to the next agenda for adoption.

Community Newsletter – Members discussed that community newsletter topics should be specific to the committee and it was suggested that the newsletter should be published quarterly. It was agreed that the committee will review all newsletters prior to publication. This would require a draft copy to be submitted one month prior to release for an initial review and to allow time for potential modifications. Member Maher indicated he is considering taking on the task. Consensus of the committee was this item does not need to remain as an agenda item.

Member Munroe's Conduct at Meetings and Sanctioning of Member Munroe –

Vice Chair Cicero made the following motion:

“Secondary to Member Munroe’s unprofessional behaviors, I hereby move that Member Munroe be removed as the appointed representative of the Exeter – West Greenwich School Committee member to SORICO.” Seconded by Member Clay.

Munroe addressed the School Committee:

“The vote you take tonight may defeat Bill Munroe, but you dishonor yourselves in doing so. Open honest discussion and diversity is the backbone of democracy. The reasons you give for having me removed from the sub-committees I serve on have no merit and is blatant political retaliation on behalf of the committee against me. Your actions serve no other purpose other than an attempt to silence me, a minority member of the committee. It is a direct violation of my first amendment rights that would prohibit me from fully performing my duly elected duties. I will ask the town of Exeter to verify my concerns that the action taken against me by the Exeter-West

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Greenwich School Committee is in violation of the charter.”

Members and Attorney Gorham debated the charter and if it is improper to appoint, reappoint or remove members from a sub committee. Chair DeSack asked if Vice Chair Cicero's motion was asking for a permanent sanction. Vice Chair Cicero confirmed it was permanent. Members further discussed the duration of the proposed removal.

School Committee members and some members of the audience engaged in a lengthy, intense debate and exchange of views and opinions relating to the rights of Member Munroe as an elected official for the town of Exeter, the rights of Member Munroe as a member of the School Committee, the rights of a School Committee member to serve on a sub committee, and the rights of the School Committee to remove one of its members from a sub committee. Members rehashed a previous discussion pertaining to Member Munroe's behavior at meetings.

Vice Chair Cicero restated her motion.

"Secondary to Member Munroe's unprofessional behaviors, I hereby move that Member Munroe be removed as the appointed representative of the Exeter – West Greenwich School Committee member to SORICO." Chair DeSack added the timeline for this motion will be this date until appointments in December by the new governing body. Seconded by Member Clay.

Members further rehashed discussions had at the previous School

Committee meeting regarding Member Munroe's behavior at meetings and his rationale for such behaviors.

Chair DeSack called the vote.

An unidentified member of the audience expressed her opinion that if the motion carries, the committee is setting precedence to do this every time someone does something the committee does not like. She said the committee is undermining Exeter citizens' representation and expressed her opinion that the committee does not have that right simply because it does not like the way Member Munroe talks to the committee.

Chair DeSack called the vote.

Voted 3 – 3 – 1. Chair DeSack, Members Munroe and McFadden voted no. Member Maher abstained. Member Maher said he "is still not convinced".

Member Munroe offered his apology for his manner and stated in the future he will try to address the committee in a more respectful fashion.

REPORTS/COMMENTS – Chair DeSack reverted to the item pulled from the consent agenda. Member Munroe pulled consent agenda item, A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Minutes of September 26,

**2006. He referenced a sentence on page 5 and
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asked it be amended as it does not clearly reflect his intent. Chair DeSack agreed to have the video reviewed to ascertain the correct wording. This item, with revisions, will be brought to the next regular school committee meeting.

IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS – October 24, 2006 – School Committee

Meeting; November 14, 2006 – School Committee Meeting

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Chair DeSack moved to go into Executive Session at

9:40 p.m. in accordance with RIGL 42-45-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 for the purpose of discussion regarding Collective Bargaining Agreement 42-46-5 (a) (2) and Personnel 42-46-5 (a) (1). Seconded by Member Munroe. Voted – 7 – 0.

Member McFadden left the meeting at this time (9:40 p.m.).

Meeting recessed to Executive Session at 9:40 p.m.

Chair DeSack moved to return to open session at 10:06 p.m. Seconded by Member Clay. Voted 6 – 0.

Chair DeSack called the meeting back to order in open session in accordance with RIGL 42-46-2(b) at 10:06 p.m.

No votes were taken.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn made by Clerk Coutcher. Seconded by Member Maher. Voted 6 – 0.

Meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK